

The GTP report: How accurate are the results?
Malaysiakini.com
March 28, 2011

The government must be commended for scoring generally high marks in its successful 1st Annual Report on its transformation programme (GTP).

With so much unnecessary politicking and negative public reaction to sensitive issues relating to race, religion and even sex scandals, there had been a heavy cloud of doubt and uncertainty as to our prospects to move forward .

However, thankfully the many achievements of the GTP have been received like a breath of fresh air. The report has uplifted our spirits and removed considerable initial doubts on viability of the GTP, at least for the time being .

All this success has led the public to now ask the following questions:

- * Are these good statistics accurate?
- * Will the good results be felt fully on the ground at the grassroots levels or just broad statistics that lack the human factor?
- * Will these encouraging results be sustained or are they a flash in the pan?
- * Are all these transformation programmes intended only for the forthcoming elections or is the government seriously thinking of the long term?
- * Will the government continue this transformation process? Will the more fundamental causes of uncertainty and unhappiness related to more racial equity, religious freedom and a better environment and quality of life, be addressed with a greater sense of purpose and priority?

On the details of the report itself, questions are already being asked and they have to be answered transparently by the government. This is necessary to dispel lingering doubts and to raise the credibility and support for the impressive GTP report and the National Key Result Areas as indicated below .

1. Reducing crime - Can the police substantiate their laudable high scores with an open public perception survey as to whether and how the people are actually affected by the reduction of the overall crime index by about 32,300 cases or 15 percent last year?.Do people now feel more safe and secure from street crimes that have reportedly gone down by a whopping 35 percent?

2. Corruption - There is no doubt that the MACC is now in the news almost daily. Much to its credit, it has raised public awareness of the dangers posed to our national security and survival by the high levels of corruption in our country. But the people still wait for more high profile cases or 'big fish' to be caught soon, to underline the government's determination to fight 'grand corruption'.

Reducing mainly grassroots corruption is not as reassuring to the general public. What can

we do, for instance, to combat money politics which is the 'mother of corruption'? The government should amend the necessary laws to attack money politics and corrupt politicians.

3. Improving student outcomes - The establishment of 1,500 preschool classes so quickly, the reported rise in the performance of the literacy rate to 85 percent and the numeracy rate to 91 percent, are indeed heart warming.

The questions parents will ask and teachers should ask are whether these high outcomes are primarily quantitative achievements or more importantly qualitative accomplishments as well. If it means that academic standards have really risen, then we all should look forward to higher employability rates too .So can we monitor these vital results, in order to better appreciate their estimated favourable outcomes?

4 Raising living standards of low income households - This, for 44,535 families or a about nearly one quarter million Malaysians is quite a feat . We should all be proud of this achievement. All Malaysians will agree that priority should always be given to improve the welfare of the poorer citizens amongst us. The 'end poverty programme' or Akhiri Zaman Miskin, should indeed be intensified and made available to all racial groups in the urban areas, to promote National Unity as well. Can urban poverty targets be included in future please?

5. Improving rural basic infrastructure - This aim has again been substantially attained by the building/upgrading of about 783 km of rural roads and the much overdue provision of water and electricity supply and housing, for about 80,000 households.

It must be stressed here that these small contracts that are often given out in a hurry to small local contractors could lead to a lot of wastage if not properly supervised. Hence their poor services could cause distress to the rural folk and become counter productive, instead of producing satisfaction and appreciation.

The availability of these useful basic needs have to be increased substantially, They certainly have to be provided to also the poor urban dwellers. They can be even more burdened by poverty in the towns where they have little or no access to land for cultivation of vegetables and rearing of poultry .

6 Improving urban public transport - This has been admitted to be one of the weak areas in the NKRA's. This is understandable because it is full of complexities. It is however heartening that the Integrated Transport Terminals at Bandar Tasik and Gombak and the KTM projects have been successfully implemented.

However this weak spot in the GTP should be given more attention, if the deep-seated daily urban public frustration is to be reduced in a timely manner. Thus there should be a firm overall policy to phase out the use of cars in preference to public transport without undue concern to protect our motor manufacturers. The people's welfare should come first.

Finally, government has really done well in adopting and implementing its ambitious transformation programme. However it has to be further strengthened and especially sustained, in order to continue to earn more public support and appreciation in the longer term as well.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/159912>